

THE GEORGIA VOLUNTEER.

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THE LIGHT BRIGADE

—

"But what have a historian, a bludgeoned gracefully, and a bludgeoned some defense of a brave soldier whose name has been under a cloud. It has been popularly decided that Captain Louis Nolan, of Lord Raglan's staff, being an impetuous soldier, died a glorious death, and the true meaning of an order which he carried into an authorization of the senseless sacrifice of the Light Brigade, and that his only excuse was that he was a first-rate soldier under the charge. Laurence Poyntz, in the Galaxy, after reviewing the topography of the battle field and the position of the forces, says:

"When Nolan left Raglan, bearing the 'fourth order.' The Russians were clustered on two hills, the English and French cavalry still hanging on. Little was in his usual mood of joy and exultation. The gallop of a horse was heard. A tall slender young officer, with a trim figure and black mustaches, was coming down a steep descent at full speed, and his white enveloping studied in his belt, and every eye was on him in a moment.

"It was Capt. Nolan, in his scarlet shell jacket, a little forage cap seen on one side of his dark curls, his eyes flashing with joy and eagerness. A audible murmur went through the ranks.

"'Orders come! Nolan's the boy that'll show us the way to move.' For a moment the well-known and universally beloved.

"In another moment he had dashed up and saluted; then handed his letter to Lord Lucan. The cavalry commander opened with the nervous haste characteristic of his movement of his lordship. When he read it over, his countenance changed. Then his lordship broke out, something in this style:

"In a good heavens, sir, what can he mean? With the little force at our command we can barely hold our own, much less advance. It is perfectly suicidal. How can we do it?"

Nolan's eye began to blaze. He had just come from the high ground where the whole Russian position could be seen at a glance. Knowing that his order contemplated the sacrifice of the Light Brigade, he came and saving the guns in the redoubts, he was impatient of the rhetorical objection of this capacious old man.

"In a strong, distinct tone he spoke to Lord Lucan:

"'Lord Raglan's orders are that the cavalry should attack immediately.'"

"Attack, sir?" cried Lucan, angrily. "Attack what? What guns, and where?"

Nolan threw his head back indignantly, and pointed to the Causeway Ridge, where the Russians were busily at work trying to haul away the guns and the guns. The group was standing the right of the entrance to the north valley.

"There, my Lord, is your enemy," he said, "and there are your guns."

"But," Captain forgot that he was talking to a man of the opposite opinion, a man of the opposite opinion. Man. Wrong-headed Lucan chose to fancy that he pointed to the nose of the valley, and with all the destiny of his nature kept to the point.

"Very well, sir, very well," he said angrily. "The order shall be obeyed. I wash my hands of it."

He wheeled his horse and trotted off to where Cardigan sat in front of the guns, his legs dragging his gray mustache and chasing over his inaction.

Then said wrong-headed Lucan: "Lord Cardigan, you will attack the Russians in the valley."

"The Earl dropped his sword in salute.

"Certainly, my Lord; but allow me to point out to you that there is a Russian in front, a battery on each flank, and a good ground covered with Russian rifles."

"I can't help it," said Lucan, snappishly: "it is Lord Raglan's positive order that the light brigade is to attack the Russian battery. We have no choice but to obey."

Then Cardigan bowed his head.

"Very well, my Lord," was all he said.

"Then turning to his staff, he said: 'The light brigade will advance,' he said, and sat quietly.

Meanwhile Nolan, after his sharp message of arms with the division commander, had ridden off to the light brigade himself, where he was to see the Russian guns, the Russian and friend, Captain Morris of the Seventeenth Lancers. Now that he had maintained his position as a south-piece of the Commander-in-

Chief against the impudent fault-finding of Luern, he felt happy. His

the cavalry was to be launched at last on this glorious mission against the Causaway Ridge, and already D'Allonville was preparing to assault the other flank of the Russians.

Who can wonder that the enthusiastic Nolan told Morris that he was going to see the brigade through the charge? It was his privilege to do so, and his heart beat high with hope. Little did he know of the extent of pig-headed stupidity natural to the two members of the English aristocracy who respectively commanded and led that charge.

"Light brigade, forward—forward—forward!"

heard in front of the brigade, who formed in three lines. Lord Lucan rode away to the "Hav'ries," the Nolan galleys, at the rear of the left of the brigade, as the sharp whistle of the bugle sounded.

"Light brigade, forward—forward—forward!"

In a moment the front line was away, as steady as if on parade, on rapid foot, following an erect gentleman, mounted on a chestnut horse, wearing a blue frock coat, breeches and a blue fustian jacket, and the front a perfect blaze of gold.

The erect gentleman was as sober in figure, as alert in gesture as a boy of twenty, and yet that man was Lord Lucan, the oldest and the Earl of Cardigan himself.

But hardly had they started when Nolan uttered a cry of astonishment and rage.

"Good God! are the fools going to charge down the valley?" he shouted.

Then, setting spurs to his horse, he dashed on of his place and galloped madly across the front, waving his sword.

"Where are you going, my lord?" he shouted. "That is not Lord Raglan's order! Change front to the right. This way! This way!"

The batteries on the ridge?

Lord Lucan, who had not tempered in his way as Lord Lucan. The audacity of an officer presuming to cross his front was enough. For that officer to address his brigade was an additional insult. He spoke not a word, but answered grimly forward with his sword. Nolan's words were lost in the thunder of hoofs, and all that was seen was his figure crossing the front and wildly gesticulating, pointing to Causaway Ridge.

Then the Russian batteries opened. There was a flash, a boom, and a second flash in the air, a little cloud of white smoke, and a loud clang of metal as the first shot burst in the trotting line. Poor Nolan threw up his arms with a fearful shriek, fell back in his saddle, stone dead, struck through the heart. With a low groan, the raging rushing horsemen quivered, shivered, then dashed on at a quick gallop into the valley of death.

The secret of Balaclava perished with Nolan.

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